



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 17-408, **Version:** 1

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**TITLE:**

Concept Plan for Affordable Commercial - Development Potential of Old 86 - Town Owned Property

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the agenda item is to update the Board on information and gather feedback from the Board of a proposal by staff to develop town-owned property for affordable commercial flex-space.

**DEPARTMENT:** Economic and Community Development

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Annette Stone, AICP, ECD Director

**INFORMATION:** Available affordable space for flex warehouse/light manufacturing is very limited in Carrboro, therefore the Board of Aldermen directed staff to identify opportunities to lift barriers to develop this type of space. Availability and cost of land is a limiting factor affecting commercial development and the town's ability to attract or retain light manufacturing companies.

Town owned property, located approximately one mile north of Calvander was originally purchased by the town in 2001 for \$767,000 and was intended for a new public works facility. The town has now determined that this location is no longer needed for that purpose, therefore staff has begun studying the property for commercial development potential. Preliminary study reveals a building program of approximately 90,000 square feet of warehouse/flex commercial space is possible (see attachment 1).

Since last reported to the Board in October, staff has been studying options for a public process to appropriately rezone the property and to create a "shovel-ready" project for possible RFP. Options include 1) annexation of the property, applying for rezoning and moving through the Town's public planning process 2) apply for rezoning and move through a joint public planning process with Orange County. Attached is a timetable for two possible approaches for the Town to consider zoning for this project (see attachment 2). Staff is seeking direction from the Board on which approach to take.

The 22 acre parcel is currently zoned RR, Rural Residential. The property could be rezoned to an Office/Assembly district which would allow for light manufacturing low impact commercial uses that generate little or no customer trips. The Town's zoning staff have done a preliminary review of the project and is providing comments back to the ECD staff.

A survey of the business community and discussions with County Economic Development staff suggested possible uses are small scale manufacturing i.e. furniture, hardware, metal-works, food processing including craft breweries, coffee roasters, food truck prep; service companies, plumbing and HVAC; tv/video/photography production; carpentry/woodworking. Staff routinely gets request for space from 500 sq ft up to 10,000 plus square feet.

So far, staff has had two meetings with neighbors. One at the Fire station on Homestead on May 11, 2017 and another meeting on site that was called by the neighborhood to discuss the project. Staff is providing notification via emails of the Board's discussions on this item. Neighbors are concerned about traffic, noise, lighting, and the rural character of the community (see attachment 3). In response to neighbor's concerns about traffic staff has been researching the opportunities for extension of Lake Hogan Farms Road. The Town is moving forward with removing barriers to development of this proposed road by securing environmental permits from the Army Corp of Engineers. However, a funding opportunity for extension of the road has not been identified.

Staff's proposal at this time would be to work towards concept development through a public planning permitting process. Controls for development could be built into a zoning permit approvals making the project "shovel-ready". This approach could further reduce cost and effect affordability of the project.

**FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT:** Staff time involved in development review and zoning, neighborhood outreach and developing an RFP plus design and consultation fees.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the Board discuss the planning/zoning processes available to the Town and direct staff accordingly.